



UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

FEB 9 2006

Mr. Michael Griffin, Administrator  
Headquarters, National Aeronautical and Space Administration  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington DC 20546-0001

Dear Mr Griffin: *MIKE*

The National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) is embarking upon a major program initiative to expand its 1.2 million square feet of exhibit space by adding a new Space Gallery. The gallery will add an additional 51,000 sq feet to the Museum and will be totally devoted to the portrayal of the Air Force's significant role in space. Recognizing that the space shuttles are nearing retirement, both the Director and the Senior Curator met with representatives from National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) recently to convey the Air Force's interest in obtaining a shuttle orbiter and robotic arm for display at the National Museum. This letter is a formal request for these artifacts.

The NMUSAF is one of the few institutions able to display and preserve a shuttle orbiter indoors in a climate-controlled and secure environment. This fact, along with the museum's middle-America location and 1.3 million visitors annually, make this location an outstanding venue. The USAF role in shuttle development and missions demonstrates the close connection between NASA and the Air Force, and makes the orbiter an ideal fit for the NMUSAF's interpretive program. The Air Force was deeply involved in determining the orbiters' design and capabilities, and many Air Force members have been shuttle astronauts. Ten shuttle flights have been devoted exclusively to Department of Defense projects, and several Air Force experiments have flown on other flights. Adding to the interpretive possibilities at the NMUSAF, the National Museum also possesses a scheduled satellite payload, the Teal Ruby spacecraft. The Museum possesses the fixtures to properly showcase the satellite in the payload bay.

Placing the space shuttle on display at the National Museum is a perfect opportunity to tell the rich history of the Air Force's space programs and the vital and important partnership that exists between the Air Force and NASA. I trust you will give this request full consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ron", is written above the printed name.

Ronald M. Sega